

interest in any worthy subject by the persistent efforts of a few determined men and women. It seems to me that too many Christians somehow get the idea that ministers only can be—or ought to be—soul winners. Now this is not only utterly wrong in conception, but it is sinful in thought. God means every disciple to be a soul-winner, in the sense that each may contribute in some way to that end. It does not follow that he or she only is the soul winner, who happens to be the one to speak the last word that leads some one to decision and confession of Christ. There has been much work, no doubt, previous to the last word. Just as there is much work done before the reaper puts in the sickle to cut down the grain. Some hand did the ploughing, some other, perhaps, the sewing, and yet another the cultivation—before he came who did the reaping. "To every man his work." Mark 13: 34. Let us be up and doing.
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GROUND HOG CHRISTIANS.

GEO. A. COPP.

Virginia is the home of the ground hog. It is a fat, furry little animal, and lives in the ground as his name indicates his head-quarters. It is a favorite dish, with the "possum," of the colored people of the state.

Tradition says that this small animal goes in the ground in the fall to stay for the winter, but on the 2nd of February he comes out and if he sees his shadow, he goes back to stay seven weeks, which means that winter weather will continue for seven weeks more after the 2nd day of February.

Actual experience, and not tradition, tells me that there are ground hog Christians, if Christians they may be called. There are those who are afraid of the shadow of all Christian work, but in its dark cold world they are not afraid of the most deadly foe.

Then there are others who are afraid of not seeing their shadow, and will not go out cloudy, stormy and rainy days, but wait until the day is calm and clear, and all else in perfection. Such usually do but little work.

There are others who come out once a winter to church, or only once a year to communion. And then if the weather is bad, or the sermon does not suit, or if the crowd is small, they go home and predict all kinds of dire evil until the time of winter or year comes again for them to come out again.

But then Christians, I am glad to say were never likened by our Lord to swine of any kind, but only the worldings as

such.—"Sow to the wallow." But Christ did liken sheep to Christians, and I am glad he did as sheep are out, or given to be out, all kinds of weather and are the cleanliest of all beasts. Let us not be any kind of a hog, but sheep, yea, sons.

SHOULD THERE BE UNIFORMITY IN THE OBSERVANCE OF THE RITES AND ORDINANCES OF THE GOSPEL?

J. B. WAMPLER.

This very important question might be answered with the affirmative yes, or the negative no. It is however, presumable that the committee in originating the topic expected a more extensive answer, and in giving such I will first define some of the terms: 1. Rite: The act of performing divine or sacred service, as established by law. 2. Ordinance: A rule established by authority; a paramount rule of action; a statute or law, edict, decree, rescript. Ecclesiastically, an established rite or ceremony. Rite: A religious ceremony.

If I may use the term ceremony relating to the form of words made use of in the Gospel by Christ such as the Lord's prayer and the formula of baptism into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, there should be uniformity. But considering prayer in a general sense it would seem almost impossible to have uniformity from the fact that circumstances and surroundings are so very different. To illustrate: It is said that a gentleman was fatally gored by an ox and his beloved wife feeling deeply interested in his welfare and desiring prayer for her dying husband sent in haste for her pastor to come and pray for him before he would die. The minister also feeling deeply interested for the dying man, grasped his prayer-book, placing it under his arm, he ran with all haste. When reaching the place the lady urged the minister to pray quickly for her husband was dying. But the minister sought in vain in his prayer-book and finally was compelled to tell the sorrowing wife that there was no prayer in his book suitable for a man that was gored by an ox. The man that originated the prayers in the book of rituals never thought of such a case and circumstances and in consequence did not have a suitable prayer.

In confirmation, ordination, and setting apart for special work, circumstances and surroundings might be such that a uniformity of prayer as a ceremony would not be appropriate and would therefore not be a necessity. All prayer should be suited to the occasion, and the attendant circumstances and surroundings.

So much for ceremony. Rites: Acts of sacred service as established in the Gospel.

Ordinances: Rules established by the authority of Jesus Christ as taught in the Gospel. According to these definitions the terms rites and ceremonies are very nearly identical. I will use them as such, and therefore positively affirm that there should be uniformity in their observance.

I will now introduce a few rules from good authors relative to the proper understanding and teaching of the Holy Bible. Mr. Taylor D. D., a very learned gentleman, says, referring to the special Bible doctrine, 1. Every word should be taken in its primary, obvious and ordinary meaning, and such meaning should not be abandoned without the weightiest reasons. 2. Whenever, by the subject matter, or context, we must depart from that literal meaning, we should depart as little as possible, and even then, with reluctance."

My second author, Mr. Carpenter, as quoted in the noted Dr. Campbell and Rice debate. See page 197. From E. nesti page 10: "The great object of solicitude with the Biblical student should be to discover the genuine signification of the individual words comprising the sacred text."

"The literal meaning of a word is always to be preferred, and not to be departed from without sufficient reasons. 1. The necessity of this rule will be found in the fact that words are usually employed by all persons in their obvious, or proper sense, and no good writer will adopt them in an improper or figurative sense without a sufficient intimation of it. 2. Where there is a plain necessity for departing from the literal sense, then we must evidently admit the tropical, but in no other case whatever."

The third and last author I offer is Mr. Horne. "Since words compose sentences and from these, rightly understood, the meaning of an author is to be collected, it is necessary that we ascertain the individual meaning of words, before we proceed further to investigate the sense of Scripture.

1. Ascertain the *usus loquendi* or notion affixed to a word by the person in general by whom the language either is now or formerly was spoken and especially in the particular connection in which such notion is affixed. 2. The received signification of a word is to be retained, unless weighty and necessary reasons require that it should be abandoned or neglected."

The "Divine Godhead." God in the person of Father, God the Son in the person of Jesus Christ, and God in the person of the Holy Spirit, in their trinity and unity as the one and only living and true God, is the author of the Rites and Ordinances of the Gospel. This Great Author